

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION 2

COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION SYSTEMS, AND WARNING

ICS FUNCTION: Logistics Section, Service Branch, Communications Unit

LEAD: Department of Emergency Management (DEM)

SUPPORT: Island County Public Information Officer
Island County Fire Districts
Island County Sheriff
Island County Central Services
ICOM 9-1-1
RACES/ARES Operators

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

1. Communications

To identify a communications scheme for the efficient flow of information during an emergency or disaster.

2. Warning

To provide or supplement alerting and warning of key officials and the public of an impending or occurring emergency or disaster.

B. Scope

This Emergency Support Function (ESF) applies to all the communication and warning assets of the governmental entities and organizations of Island County including radio, Island Communications (ICOM, 9-1-1), voice and data links, telephone and cellular systems, National Warning System (NAWAS), Emergency Alert System (EAS), and amateur radio.

II. POLICY

- A.** In accordance with RCW 38.52.110 (1), in responding to a disaster, or the threat of a disaster, the Board of Island County Commissioners (BOICC) is directed to utilize the services, equipment, supplies, and facilities of

existing departments, offices, and agencies of the state, political subdivisions, and all other municipal corporations thereof, including, but not limited to, districts and quasi municipal corporations organized under the laws of the State of Washington to the maximum extent possible. The officers and personnel of all such departments, offices, and agencies are directed to cooperate with and extend such services and facilities upon request notwithstanding any other provision of law.

- B.** ICOM and the DEM shall periodically conduct tests of local warning systems and procedures and familiarize governmental entities and the public with their use.
- C.** Public information operations to include warning messages will, whenever possible, be conducted in accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) Joint Information System (JIS) practices.

III. SITUATION

- A.** Emergency/Disaster Conditions and Hazards
 - 1. Island County will continue to be vulnerable to a variety of hazards requiring that warning and alerting information be passed to citizens, elected officials, and responding organizations.
 - 2. The sudden and unexpected nature hazards and emergencies requires that notification and warning be issued by multiple means and media at any hour and any day.
 - 3. Communications and warning preparedness planning, preparation, and training are critical task that must be addressed before the emergency occurs.
- B.** Planning Assumptions
 - 1. Reliance on cellular telephone service is increasing for all governments and jurisdictions. Cell phone service capacity is easily overloaded during emergencies and reliability is degraded during prolonged power outages.
 - 2. Reliable communications are necessary at all levels of government

for day-to-day communication, warning of impending disasters, disaster response and recovery operations, search and rescue operations, and coordination between the state, local governments, and response agencies.

3. Emergency or disaster warning may originate from any level of government.
4. The NAWAS, established by the Federal Government, is the primary means of receiving and disseminating warning(s) to state and local officials. Island County's primary NAWAS receiving point is ICOM.
5. Notification of a threatening situation may come from the EAS, National Weather Service - via NOAA Weather Radio, the media, the amateur radio community, or the public.
6. Governmental entities of Island County will initially focus on coordinating lifesaving activities and reestablishing communications and control in the disaster area.
7. Initial reports of damage may be fragmentary, duplicated, and provide an incomplete or distorted picture of the damage.
8. In the event that instructions to the public need to be translated, the provision of interpreters will be coordinated through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). A Spanish language translator for the PIO should be identified in advance.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. Communications

1. The ICOM center is located at 840 SE Barrington Drive, Oak Harbor, Washington. ICOM functions as the countywide 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), and provides dispatch services for law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical agencies. ICOM also serves as the initial communications, alert, and warning point for emergency management. Telephone numbers for ICOM are:

Emergencies: 911
Business: (360) 679-9567
FAX: (360) 675-4717

2. Some emergency communications in the form of amateur radio RACES/ARES are provided from the County EOC. Public information calls may be shifted from ICOM to a telephone bank at the Island County EOC.
3. EAS, when activated, will operate through local radio, cable TV stations, and NOAA weather radio. EAS is intended to provide state and local officials with the means to disseminate prompt, reliable emergency information, instructions, and warnings in the event of an emergency or disaster. EAS is not meant to be used to provide informational up-dates.
4. The communication capabilities presently available at ICOM and the EOC include:
 - a. 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)
 - b. Commercial telephone (landline) and cellular
 - c. Two-way radio
 - d. NAWAS, landline located in ICOM.
 - e. Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) radio and data system via amateur frequency bands at the EOC. (Refer to separate Island County RACES Plan)
 - f. Satellite telephone at the EOC

B. Warning

1. Whenever Island County emergency management officials are alerted to the threat or occurrence of a hazardous event that could lead to, or has resulted in, an emergency or a disaster, the EOC will be activated at the appropriate level and the situation monitored. Depending on the circumstances, monitoring could be a prolonged activity or result in the immediate activation of the local information and warning system.
2. EOC monitoring will consist of the accumulation, display, and evaluation of relevant information, release of appropriate public

information advisories, and alerting response agencies and organizations of the situation. A media and agency list for advisories and warnings is included at TAB C.

3. As soon as it is apparent that the public must take some action to prepare or protect itself, the local warning system will be activated. Warning could include one or more of the following means (not prioritized):
 - a. FAX/pager/radio/e-mail.
 - b. Activation of the EAS to disseminate urgent information.
 - c. PIO releases to local media.
 - d. Activating a call response center in the EOC.
 - e. Posting signs (when appropriate to the type of incident).
 - f. Fire services and law enforcement apparatus providing warnings along specific routes using public address systems and sirens.
 - g. Activation of volunteer resources.
4. Public information media releases and advisories will be updated as necessary until the hazard has subsided.
5. The Tsunami Warning System is described in TAB D.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Lead: DEM

1. Develop and maintain appropriate plans and procedures to ensure, to the extent practical, the integrity of the emergency communications system.
2. In coordination with ICOM, conduct tests and exercises of the communication and warning systems.
3. Develop EOC procedures for gathering, displaying, and evaluating relevant information.

4. Develop appropriate notification lists (elected officials, department heads, other agencies) and procedures for activating the information and warning system. Include consideration of special populations such as the handicapped, the elderly and infirm, schools, day care centers, and nursing homes.
5. Coordinate public information and warnings with local jurisdictions and surrounding counties as appropriate.
6. Maintain the EOC in a configuration to support the warning systems and effective communications.
7. Include communications and warning as part of the county-wide emergency management training and exercise program.

B. Support

1. ICOM
 - a. Serve as the primary receiving point for NAWAS.
 - b. Develop and maintain procedures to share disaster related information with the EOC.
 - c. Participate in county emergency management training and exercises.
 - d. Relay Public Works and utility information to the appropriate agencies/departments/companies.
 - e. Maintain appropriate back-up power and communications systems.
2. Fire Services
 - a. Develop and maintain procedures to provide communications, warning support, and services when requested by the EOC.
 - b. In coordination with DEM, train personnel in proper warning methods. Develop plans to warn local area using

vehicle mounted public address equipment.

3. Island County Sheriff
 - a. Develop and maintain procedures to provide communications, warning support, and services when requested from the EOC.
 - b. In coordination with DEM, train personnel in proper warning methods. Develop plans to warn local area using vehicle mounted public address equipment.
4. Public Information (Sheriff's Office)

Coordinate public information and instructions and media relations as defined in ESF #15, External Affairs and Public Information

VI. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Implementation of this ESF requires specific equipment to monitor the NWS, EAS, and NOAA weather radio frequencies. Functioning equipment and trained operators are required for RACES support in amateur radio nets established by the state and the county. Maintain equipment to operate in the Comprehensive Emergency Management Network (CEMNET). Other emergency radio equipment will operate in the following ranges: 800 MHZ, VHF, UHF, and high frequency

VII. REFERENCES

- A. Island County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) Plan
- B. Island County CEMP, Appendix 2 Public Information and Appendix 3, References
- C. Washington State EMD National Warning System (NAWAS) Operations Handbook
- D. Emergency Alert System (EAS) Local Operational Area Plan

VIII. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- A. See Island County CEMP, References, Definitions and Acronyms

- B.** Acronyms used in the ESF, TAB A

TABS

- A.** Acronym List
- B.** State and Federal Support Organizations and Services.
- C.** Selected Media, Government, and Community Addressees for Information, Advisories, and Warnings.
- D.** Tsunami Warning Plan

TAB A**ACRONYMS**

ARES	Amateur radio Emergency System
BOICC	Board of Island County Commissioners
CEMNET	Comprehensive Emergency Management Net
DEM	Department of Emergency Management
EAS	Emergency Alerting System
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ESF	Emergency Support Function
ICOM	Island Communications 9-1-1
ICS	Incident Management System
JIS	Joint Information System
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NOAA	National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration
NWAS	National Warning System
PIO	Public Information Officer
PSAP	Public Safety Answering Point
RACES	Radio Amateur Communications Emergency System
RCW	Revised Code of Washington

TAB B

STATE AND FEDERAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICES

I. STATE

A. COMMUNICATIONS

State Emergency Management has overall responsibility for planning and coordinating the emergency communication program within the state as identified in the *Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan*.

B. WARNING

1. Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) is responsible for ensuring the receipt and dissemination of warning information throughout the state. Identical equipment installed in both the State Emergency Management EOC and Washington State Patrol Dispatch make it possible for either facility to disseminate warning information depending on the time of day (the State EOC is manned on a 24 hour basis). Both locations use NAWAS and ACCESS to disseminate warning information to local governments.

2. Warnings, watches, and advisories will be transmitted by the National Weather Service to the State Warning Point for:

- Floods
- Tsunamis
- Avalanches
- Severe weather

3. Other warnings that may be issued by the State Warning Point include, but are not limited to:

- Volcanic eruptions
- Nuclear incidents
- Hazardous material incidents
- Earthquakes
- Warning information to localized areas at the request of the political subdivisions

3. Upon receipt of any warning, the primary or alternate State Warning Point will transmit the information, without delay, to those political subdivisions that may be affected.
4. Other responsibilities are identified by the *Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan*.

II. FEDERAL

A. FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)

Under a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration, emergency communication support may be provided in disaster areas where such facilities have been disrupted.

B. FEDERAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION (FCC)

In the event of an emergency disrupting normally available communication facilities in a widespread area, the Commission, in its discretion, may declare that a general state of communication emergency exists, designate the area concerned, and specify the amateur frequency bands, or segments of such bands, for use only by amateurs participating in emergency communication within or with such affected areas in accordance with FCC Rules and Regulations, Section 97-107 - Emergency Operations.

C. NATIONAL WARNING SYSTEM (NAWAS)

1. The NAWAS Warning Point terminal, lines, and equipment throughout the state are provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the purpose of rapid dissemination of warnings.
2. Operational direction and control of the NAWAS is exercised by the National Warning Center except when emergency situations exist only within the State of Washington. During such time, direction and control is exercised through the Washington State Emergency Management Division.

D. NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE (NWS)

The National Weather Service is responsible for forecasts and weather warnings, which may present a threat to life and/or property.

E. U.S.G.S CASCADES VOLCANO OBSERVATORY

This combined effort of the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, FEMA, and the University of Washington is responsible for issuing volcanic activity or eruption advisories and warnings.

TAB C**SELECTED MEDIA, GOVERNMENT, AND COMMUNITY ADDRESSES FOR INFORMATION, ADVISORIES, AND WARNINGS****NEWSPAPERS:****Telephone**

The Whidbey News/Times	360-679-2695
Coupeville Examiner	360-678-6073
Skagit Valley Herald	360-428-5300
South Whidbey record	360-221-5300
Stanwood/Camano News	360-629-4211
Seattle P-I, News Editor	306-448-8166
Seattle Times, News Desk	206-464-2261

RADIO:

KIRO (Seattle, 710 AM, 100.7 FM)	206-230-7916
KVI (Seattle)	206-516-3101
KOMO (Seattle, 1000 AM)	206-443-4010
KUOW (Seattle, 94.9 FM)	
KLKI (Anacortes)	360-293-3141
KAPS (Mt. Vernon)	360-424-7676
KWDB (Oak Harbor, 1110 AM) Local EAS Station	360-240-1520
KRKO (Everett, 1380 AM and KBRC, Mount Vernon 1430 AM)	360-424-4278/7200
KSER (Everett, 90.7 FM, Everett)	

TELEVISION:Seattle

KOMO/4 - ABC	206-443-4000
KING/5 - NBC	1-800-NEWS-5
KIRO/7 - CBS	206-624-7077
KCTS/9-PBS	206-443-6691
KCPQ/13-FOX	206-674-1305

Bellingham

KBCB/24 MONDO TV

Cable Providers

COMCAST Cable	877-824-2288
Millennium Cable	

OTHER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS:

Washington State EMD		
Skagit DEM	(360) 428-3250	FAX: (360) 428-3255
Snohomish DEM	(425) 423-7635	FAX: (425) 423-9152
San Juan DEM	(360) 378-9932	FAX: (360) 378-7125
Whatcom DEM	(360) 676-6681	FAX: (360) 738-2518

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

Island County Chapter-American Red Cross (360) 257-2096 FAX: (360) 675-9483

TAB D**TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM AND PROCESS**

Island County is vulnerable to the effects of tsunamis from local and distant earthquakes. While the West and south coasts of Whidbey Island are the most exposed to a tsunami, all Island county coastal areas are some risk depending on the location of the initial earthquake. Not all tsunamis are caused by earthquakes, large landslides into water may also cause a tsunami wave. Island County has many high bluffs and is bordered on almost all sides by other areas of high bluffs. These areas have a well documented history of sliding or slumping onto beaches and water.

Local Tsunami Sources

Local sources of tsunamis are earthquakes within the Puget Sound basin and landslides caused by a variety of sources including earthquakes. Local source tsunamis provide very little warning time. Persons living or working at or near sea level and feeling a strong earthquake should immediately suspect a possible tsunami and **move inland to the highest elevation they can reach traveling at a safe speed**. Coastal residents should know the location of, and follow tsunami evacuation route signs if present. The upper floors of a beach level building are not good shelters unless they are the lonely option. If time permits local warning may be generated using the Emergency Alerting System (EAS) and commercial radio, weather radios, and television. Time permitting, law enforcement or fire services may provide localized warning using sirens and public address systems. Do not return to beach level locations until authorities announce it is safe to do so.

Distant Tsunami Sources

A distant source for Island County purposes is an earthquake or other seismic event outside the Puget Sound basin. Tsunami warning times for these events may range from minutes to hours. Warnings for distant source tsunamis will be generated by the West Coast/Alaska Tsunami Warning Center. In Palmer Alaska. If a tsunami is generated they will issue a warning bulletin.

Upon receipt of a warning bulletin the National Weather Service (NWS) will activate the EAS in the affected area. Warning bulletins will also be received and subsequent warning messages will be generated from the Washington State Emergency Operations Center. The Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI) also receives the warning message from the Warning Center in Alaska. The warning messages are directed to ICOM in Oak Harbor which operates 24 hours per day. NASWI will also provide ICOM a courtesy call when a warning message is received. Upon receipt ICOM will initiate preplanned calls to local officials, law enforcement, fire, public works and the hospital and EMS. ICOM also has the capability to initiate a local EAS message if appropriate.

Depending on time available, all media, and local warning measures will be used to notify the threatened areas. Time permitting, shelters will be opened at safe locations well inland from the coast. Persons cannot be forced to evacuate their residences. On the other hand, access to a threatened area can be stopped.

When the threat is over, the same media and systems will be used to announce the end of the emergency. Access to threatened area may still be restricted to identified residents to minimize possible crime.

Tsunami Warning Information Resources

The following web sites may carry tsunami warning information of interest to Island County:

- Emergency Alert System (EAS) in Washington:
<http://www.wsab/org.eas.eas.html>
- National Weather Service, Seattle: <http://weather.gov/seattle>
- West Coast/Alaska Tsunami Warning Center: <http://www.wcatwc.noaa.gov.gov/>
- Pacific Tsunami Warning Center: <http://www.prh.noaa.gov/ptwc/>
- Tsunami Detection Buoys: <http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/dart.shtml>

A process chart of the tsunami warning system is attached.

Tsunami Warning System Process Diagram

